New York Tribune

First to Last—the Truth: News—Editorials—Advertisements

Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2, 1918

Owned and published daily by The Tribune Association, a New York Corporation. Ogden Reid, President; G. Vernor Rogers, Vice-President; F. A. Suter, Treasurer. Address, Tribune Building, 154 Nassau Street, New York. Telephone, Beekman 3000.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.—By Mail, Postage Paid, outside of Greater New York:

IN THE UNITED STATES. OUTSIDE OF GREATER NEW YORK

	1 yr.	6 mo.	3 mo.	1 mo.
Daily and Sunday	$9.50	$4.75	$2.50	$0.85
Daily only	7.00	3.50	1.75	.60
Sunday only	2.50	1.25	.75	.25

CANADIAN RATES

Daily and Sunday	$10.00	$5.00	$2.50	$1.00
Daily only	7.00	3.50	1.75	.60
Sunday only	5.00	2.50	1.25	.50

FOREIGN RATES

Daily and Sunday	$24.00	$12.00	$6.00	$2.00
Daily only	18.00	9.00	4.50	1.50
Sunday only	7.00	3.50	1.75	.60

Entered at the Postoffice at New York as Second Class Mail Matter.

Our Farcical Budget

Representative John J. Fitzgerald is out of Congress. May his missionary work in behalf of a rational Federal budget be taken up by a successor in the inner circles of the House of Representatives as zealous as he was to bring about intelligent and responsible control of Federal expenditures!

The present system of control is farcical. The preparation and supervision of appropriation bills are intrusted to various committees of the House and Senate, each one of which possesses independent authority. There is no central adjustment and accounting bureau. The estimates come to Congress from the many departments and bureaus of the government without revision or coördination on the part of the Executive. The House committees wrestle with these figures—as a rule reducing them materially. Then the Senate committees make restorations on a liberal scale and the differences between the two houses are settled in conference committee.

The inevitable results of the system are maladjustment and waste. Senator Aldrich once said in a moment of calculated candor that the waste on government appropriations was about 30 per cent. He knew what he was talking about, and it is to his credit that he tried to secure a stricter control of appropriations by creating a committee of committees in the Senate, on which the chairmen of all the money-voting committees should serve and through which they might cooperate in holding appropriations within proper limits. The time was not ripe, however, for Mr. Aldrich's experiment. His committee on committees was disbanded after a short career of sterility and futility.

The peculiarities of our system of government by checks and balances have made it difficult for us to conform our budget practice to the model adopted by other nations. The preparation of a budget is, normally, an executive function. The executive branch, which is going to spend the money, ought to be held responsible for the total of national expenditure, as well as for the manner in which that total is used. Under a parliamentary form of government this principle is easy of application, since the parliament creates the Executive and in approving a budget merely ratifies the judgment of the leaders of the majority, who compose the Cabinet. Our system of separation of powers has been pushed to the extreme of requiring Congress to fix both the amount and all the details of expenditure, thus relieving the Executive from responsibility for wasteful appropriations and for failure to keep expenditure within the limits of income. Under an ideal budget system the legislative branch is not permitted to take the initiative in proposing expenditure. It merely criticises, and either approves or rejects a budget submitted to it. Its chief duty is to see that the money which it grants is properly used. Under our system the only check on expenditure is the Controller of the Treasury, an executive officer appointed by the President.

We cannot introduce a normal budget system in this country without materially altering the existing relations between Congress and the Executive. It is possible, of course, for Congress to pass laws requiring the estimates to be submitted in a digested form, with the approval of the President. One appropriation measure might cover all the estimates. Congress might also deny itself the power to alter items therein or to introduce new items. It might further admit heads of departments to the floors of the House and Senate, to face criticism and defend the estimates. But such a change would be far from agreeable to most Congressmen, since they would thereby lose a power and personal prestige which are exceedingly grateful to them.

So radical a reform could not be effected this year, or even next year. The only hope for the present of more efficient control of expenditure lies, therefore, in the simplification of the existing machinery. This can be accomplished without a prohibitive amount of friction by returning to the ancient practice of control of all appropriations by a single committee.

Up to 1865 the Ways and Means Committee of the House had entire charge of appropriations. It also had charge of revenue legislation, banking and currency and various related subjects. These burdens grew too heavy for one committee to carry and Thaddeus Stevens, the House leader, decided to create an appropriations committee and to put himself at its head. The power of the new committee over appropriations was unchallenged until 1880, when the log-rollers of the Rivers and Harbors Committee took it into their heads that they could get more money out of the Treasury for their projects by dodging a submission of them to the Appropriations Committee. John H. Reagan had the happy inspiration of moving to pass a Rivers and Harbors bill under suspension of the rules, the rules requiring it to go to the Appropriations Committee. He easily got a two-thirds majority to support him. Thereupon the privilege of bringing in a Rivers and Harbors bill was awarded to the Rivers and Harbors Committee and the privilege of bringing in an agricultural appropriation bill was awarded to the Committee on Agriculture.

The great drive on the Appropriations Committee came about five years later. Colonel William R. Morrison ("Horizontal Bill") cherished a fierce grudge against Samuel J. Randall because the latter had helped to kill the Morrison tariff bill. Being a member of the Committee on Rules, he got through that body, with the aid of Thomas B. Reed and Frank Hiscock, a resolution taking from Randall, who was then chairman of the Appropriations Committee, jurisdiction over the diplomatic, military, Military Academy, naval, Indian and postoffice appropriation bills and assigning these bills to other committees. He won on the floor because many other low tariff Democrats were eager to punish Randall—and many pork hunters realized the advantage of the new system of distribution.

Morrison's revenge cost the Treasury hundreds of millions of dollars. The country is still paying for it. But even Congress now sees that waste must stop, and that it can be stopped in part by a return to a single committee with jurisdiction over all appropriations.

It is more vital now than ever before that waste in Federal expenditure should stop. The budget method followed for the last thirty-three years has condemned itself. One easy step toward a better system can be made at once. Will the House of Representatives have the breadth of vision to take that step?

Unwarranted Changes

It is not necessary to consider the so-called Hylan programme of legislation in detail at this time. Put forward as the maximum of the demand on Albany for the means to enable the new administration to redeem its campaign promises, it will also serve as a last defensive line for failure to execute some of those promises if the Legislature, as seems altogether probable, refuses to give its assent to certain proposals. When the bills to carry out these proposals are before the Legislature it will be ample time to analyze their provisions.

Meantime there are a few features of this programme which, because of their utter contradiction of the trend of enlightened political theory and practice, do deserve consideration—and immediate and continued opposition. Two of these are the recommendation for legislation permitting the election of the 1st District Public Service Commission and the recommendation for a charter amendment to make possible the election of the Corporation Counsel. These changes would be deplorable. There is no reason for the election of the Public Service Commissioners or the Corporation Counsel. These are offices which should be kept out of the tumult of an election, not thrown into the hurly-burly of political contests. To make their incumbents elective would not be to make them more responsive to the public; it would be merely to force them to take an active part in politics. It would add names to a ballot already too long. It would add work to voters already confused with the burden of selections they have to make in the voting booth. It would give more opportunity for traffic in offices to the professional politicians.

Nor should there be any repeal of the pay-as-you-go law. That is a safe, sound provision, sustaining New York City's credit and fostering an honest financial policy. It was adopted following an agreement between the city's financial officers and the purchasers of the city's securities, who were unwilling to venture heavily on further purchases until the city stopped mortgaging the future recklessly. It is true that while this law stands expenditures must be calculated closely and carefully. That is precisely what the law was intended to compel. It prevents the city from spending money like a drunken sailor. Its repeal would open the way to extravagances and improper, unwise expenditures which would not be possible with it on the statute books. The demand for its repeal is one of the most suspicious signs attendant on the taking office of a Tammany administration.

Drinking by Soldiers and Others

It is curious to remark that while we are debating the desirability of compelling civilians to be as abstemious as soldiers and sailors some reformers on the other side of the Atlantic are asking why the standards of non-combatants should not be adopted in the services.

It is not implied that the fighting men do not drink enough, but rather that the others are, by comparison, models of temperance, for the wearing of a uniform puts a man as yet under no extraordinary handicaps in England. The demand, then, is simply that they be as abstemious as the rest of the population.

A medical man who lives near one of the greatest military centres in Great Britain and who believes "that within reason a man is all the better for alcohol" has drawn attention to this matter in "The Daily Telegraph." He is a foe of prohibition. "But," he asks, "would any one be the worse if the army and navy were to put themselves on the same allowance of liquor as the rest of the nation? Surely it is not impossible to introduce a self-denying ordinance that alcohol should be drunk only at certain hours of the day and that any form of treating or drinking as a mere ceremony should be 'bad form.'"

As far as public places go, the civilian is indeed allowed to drink only at certain hours; at no hour is treating countenanced, and the current price of liquor has made it almost impossible for the man of moderate income to drink immoderately.

It is perhaps this last circumstance that has contributed most of all to the promotion of temperance, and now that ordinary brands of whiskey—much diluted—are selling in London at $5 or so a bottle, there is reason to hope that before very long none but generals can afford to be drunken. But in any case it is anomalous that civilians and soldiers should not be subjected to the same restrictions.

The Perfect Bureaucrat

That heroic young bureaucrat of the Ordnance Department who has lived to make Raritan famous deserves more than a passing gust of laughter. The perfect pattern of his breed, a super-bureaucrat, he ought to be immortalized in bronze on the banks of the Raritan. He ought to be handed down to posterity along with our other warrior heroes. If we ever forget him, ill tide the day for America!

The explanation by General Crozier of the blunder is almost as good as the original discovery of the imaginary ordnance depot. "One of the younger of the 700 officers who have been added to my staff, looking over the contracts and taking it for granted that the contractors would do as they had promised, saw that the barracks there should be completed, and ordered some men there," says General Crozier. "Should be completed," therefore they *were* completed. Could there be a prettier picture of the perfect bureaucrat swivelling amid his charts and dockets and files and fighting his war on paper to the last document, utterly untrammelled by the coarse facts of the outside world!

This is sublime stuff, and Mr. Baker's own explanation, tinged with bureaucratic omnipotence as it is, suffers by comparison. The Secretary refers to the depot as "at Raritan" three times running, thus upholding the department in its location of the site, at any rate. Then in the final paragraph he drifts to "near Raritan." Now, the depot is really some fifteen miles from Raritan. It is "near Metuchen." It is at or near Raritan only in that imaginary world wherein all bureaucracy lives and moves and has its being.

The pity is that such souls must in the end be checked up by the facts. If only war in the flesh, the crude physical combat, could be entirely separated from bureaucracy! The battle of the bureaucrats could then be fought out as an interesting side issue by armies of bureaucrats furiously docketing and reporting and directing. But its progress would not affect the main combat. How much better for bureaucrats—and soldiers!

This Question of Names

Now that Mr. George Moore has prevailed in the suit brought against him by a music hall artist of London, named Louis Seymour, there is much to-do in British periodicals over the question of novelists and British names. Nobody blames anybody for objecting to an association with the latest product of Mr. Moore's elderly pen—an elderly pen can be disgusting under circumstances in which a youthful pen is simply diverting. Mr. Moore's rewritten novel deserves very little consideration from any one.

But the victory for the novelist is hailed as a victory for all writers and as a very sound rebuke for those anxious money-grabbers who have seized upon every accidental resemblance of name to commence an action for damages. In this country the general disfavor in which libel suits are held has saved our novelists from annoyance. In England there have been a number of suits and a number of heavy recoveries.

One point raised by critics is the impossibility of inventing any conceivable name which will not turn out to be a very common surname on some particular parish register of Great Britain. Arabel Pickles or Marmaduke Honeyblossom Whoopingnose are equally unsafe, observes that entertaining critic of "The New Statesman" who writes over the name of Solomon Eagle. (Is there a real Solomon Eagle somewhere in England, we wonder, to protest against this liberty with his title!) "Gotobed" is cited as the name of a draper in a small cathedral city, by way of illustration of just how far an Englishman will go in keeping a name handed down to him.

Are American surnames less eccentric? Do they tend more to conform to style and the common run? So it seems to the American who visits England—despite the busy activities of those contributors to columns who spend all their lives in reporting that J. Ink sells stationery at Poughkeepsie. Yet the mere strangeness of new names probably accounts for much of this shock in a foreign land. We have met Englishmen who were equally amazed over here. Perhaps there is a greater fixity of surnames in England on the whole. A particular town or parish seems to keep its particular style and spelling more persistently than here. Our ascents and descents from class to class and our shifts east and west and from city to country probably wear off some of the eccentricities of spelling, at any rate.

There is a point that seems to indicate a reverse tendency, and that is the affection which Americans have for eccentric given names. Almost anything will do as a handle. A child named War was reported the other day. There are all too likely some little Tariffs trotting around in good Republican districts. Almost any popular hero from a President to a prizefighter has his crop of namesakes. Heroes and heroines of fiction have their echoes. In England there is a pretty stiff adherence to the good old-fashioned standbys—in endless combination but without pollution from the news of the day.

Speaking generally, we guess that English surnames are more individual and American given names more individual. But what can we say if Don Marquis of Walnut, Bureau County, Ill., happens to be in the house!

The Lewis Gun

Where It Is Honored, Appreciated and Used

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: It is an old saying that "a prophet is not without honor save in his own country." The investigation as to the experience of the Lewis gun with the Ordnance Department interests us all. May I call attention to a striking article in "The London Graphic" of December 1, where the uses of machine guns on the fighting front are pointed out quite graphically, and the details of some of these guns are well illustrated? Manifestly the article and the illustrations have been prepared by a technical expert. I quote from page 689—and let us not forget that this was written after three years' testing in the field:

"The most notable example of the air-cooled weapon is the Lewis gun, invented by Colonel I. N. Lewis, Coast Artillery Corps, United States Army, and now in general use by the Allies. This ingenious rifle derives sufficient energy for its operation while the bullet is passing from a gas-port to the muzzle during the minute period of one nine-thousandth of a second. Consisting of forty-nine parts, it can be dismounted, using only the point of a bullet, and its recoil is so slight that it can be fired when held at arm's length. Its lightness, dependent on the air-cooling system, renders it of great use in an advance, while the Maxim is useful chiefly in consolidation and defence."

It can be seen going forward "in an advance" in the double page illustration in "The Illustrated London News" of December 1, second figure from the right in the foreground, easily recognizable by its ammunition disk, instead of a belt.

E. HENRY LACOMBE.

New York, Dec. 24, 1917.

"Delenda est Borussia"

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: I beg to thank you for your outspoken editorial discussion of German peace terms. You have done a very great service in aid of clear thinking and in stimulation of vigorous action. The greatest menace to the future of the world lies in the belief held by many well meaning but ill-informed people, especially in the United States, that it is possible to reach some sort of lasting peace by negotiation with the enemy. It finds varying expression, ranging from the anæmic intellectual perversion of "The Evening Post," which saw in Count Czernin's terms "an offer which the Allies are bound to entertain," down to open, shameless German propaganda. It is even implicit in some of the President's pronouncements in so far as he implies the possibility of negotiations with a "reorganized" or "democratized" Germany, and tries to differentiate between the German people and their imperial rulers.

No peace that shall be safe can be reached by any negotiation with a Germany in arms. One does not debate terms with a red-handed murderer. He must first be disarmed, overpowered completely. But even then one does not "negotiate" with him. If he is to be allowed to survive at all it must be on terms to be laid down by his conquerors.

You say truly that the "beginning of peace is reparation, restoration, restitution." But that is not enough. There remains—retribution. If justice is to be meted out punishment must follow crime, in the case of nations as of individuals. If the court of nations fails in this the crime will be repeated and our children will have the problem still to solve.

Let there be no talk of any peace before a complete victory is won, whether it takes two years or ten. Rather there is need of a Cato to demand insistently—"Delenda est Borussia."

H. L. P.

New York, Dec. 29, 1917.

Red Cross Stamps on Packages

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Owing to your interest in the problems of merchandising, and the fair treatment of the public by the merchants of this city, I should like to call your attention to a patriotic custom instituted in the town of Chapel Hill, N. C., where the University of North Carolina is situated.

There, as elsewhere, a propaganda was started to induce purchasers to carry home their own parcels, in order "to save money." The only people it saved money for, in the popular conception, were the merchants themselves. Prices kept on going up, and there was no concession to the customer who carried home his own purchases. Then the local branch of the Red Cross went to the merchants and asked them to buy a supply of Red Cross stamps and to paste one of them on every package carried home by the purchaser.

The merchants acceded, and the effect was immediate. Many persons are now seen on the streets of Chapel Hill carrying home their own parcels, and on each parcel a Red Cross stamp is conspicuously displayed. The merchants get most of their parcels carried to the homes of the purchasers at a cost of one cent each, and the Red Cross receives the cent.

Could not some such arrangement be brought about between the merchants and the Red Cross in this city? ROY MASON.

New York, Dec. 29, 1917.

Committee Hearings on One Day

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Now that the Legislature is about to convene for the session of 1918, it is important that some reform be made in our system of hearings before the several legislative committees. Many persons have complained that after making the long trip to the capital to appear before a certain committee they were sadly disappointed to learn that the hearing was cancelled or postponed, owing to pressure of other business or lack of time.

If for no other reason than the elimination of unnecessary railroad travel at this time, I believe we should give this matter serious attention and, as a suggestion, I propose the following:

That Wednesday of each week be reserved for committee hearings; that all committees meet on that day; that the regular Wednesday session be held at night.

JOHN V. SHERIDAN.

New York, Dec. 28, 1917.

Young Men Going to War

With lifted faces, drinking from the bowl
Of valiant sunlight poised upon the earth,
We are made richer; swiftly comes to birth
Indomitable impulses of soul.
The white-browed day is like an aureole
And night is filled with clashing swords and mirth
To give life witness that there is no dearth
Of eagerness to greet the fiery goal.
With sunlight on our brows and hearts of flame
We follow voices, clear, auspicious, sweet,
To where the scarlet waves of battle thrill,
Like conquerors we go of ancient fame
Who march into the night on sounding feet
And greet Adventure on her farthest hill!

HERBERT S. GORMAN.

Christmas in Our Town

By Emma Bugbee

It was Christmas in Our Town, still very early and dark, with the Christmas stars shining overhead, although the first dull yellow of dawn was creeping above the hills across the river. There was snow on the garden and ice on the streets, so that approaching footsteps crunched noisily on the walks, filling the stillness with a cheerful clatter even before the voices of the carollers rang out in the dark:

"It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old."

Yes, it was really Christmas, just as it used to be before the war, with Mother bending over, whispering: "Wake up, darlings, and hear the Christmas song."

Childish memories cling more fondly in Our Town to those mysterious sweet songs coming so suddenly out of the dark than they do even to the visit of Santa Claus. Perhaps it was because we knew that Santa would leave anything nice he might happen to have, and it would keep until morning; but the carollers were a fragment of wonderfulness that could not be preserved, a moment of sheer delight that could never be recaptured, even by the carols around the piano in the dusk of Christmas afternoon. As children we turned over happily and went to sleep again with the silver song ringing in our ears. But with the years our interest grew, until we knew the words and the entire programme, and could follow the carollers on their way past the schoolhouse and down the hill to the parsonage, where they all went in for coffee. We always thought that quite the most gracious act of hospitality Our Town ever witnessed. It was one thing to lie warm in bed, enjoying the visit of the carollers, but quite another to get up and make coffee for a crowd of half-frozen boys and girls.

"I wonder where the bass voices are. It sounds so weak," whispered Our Mother, and as she spoke she remembered where they were. So the war came with the Christmas dawn.

Our Carollers

Our carollers were not a native product. The traditions of the Puritans lay stern across Our Town, which grew up around the new church when it was found to be too hard for the farmers to travel eight miles across the hill to meeting. We would never have invented carolling, although we might wish we could. It was the English down in the valley, who came when the mills began to boom, bringing their own Established Church and their own cheerful English customs. That was how it came about that the carollers were weak on the bass, for their best voices were singing in the trenches long since.

As Christmas Day dawned and passed through its merry hours, there was every now and again a reminder as sharp as this of the reality we were trying to forget. The Lady Across the Street had shut up her house and gone away. Her boy was in Scotland, on "Andy" Carnegie's estate, chopping down trees with the lumberjacks. The home from which resounded on other Christmases such huge sounds of collegiate mirth that the whole neighborhood alternately chuckled and cursed was still this year, and undecorated, save for the red gleam of a one-starred service flag in an upper window.

Those flags hung in almost every window on Our Hill. In homes where there was no flag we knew it was because there was no son. From the House Around the Corner the youngest son had gone three years ago to drive an ambulance, and never came back. It may be that his brave young spirit, calling to the boys who used to romp with him over our hills, has been partly responsible for the large number of recruits to army and navy from Our Hill.

The First War Christmas

Thank God that for this first War Christmas they had not gone so far they could not yet return. It was this that made it merry Christmas still, in spite of everything; and mothers who dared not think of next year busied themselves with turkey and red Santa Clauses with a hilarity never before assumed. And now Our Mother rejoiced with every other mother as the homecomers toiled up the hill after the Christmas morning train!

"Here comes Horace! He's been promoted to first lieutenant. Isn't he splendid in that overcoat! And how little his father looks beside him! His mother has been baking for a week."

"Even Roy is coming—all the way from Allentown—to spend the day with the Smiths. They are as proud of him as if they were his own parents, and he is devoted to them, although Mrs. Smith says he has never given up the search for his own mother. He plans to spend his furloughs in Paris looking for her. Some one has told him she had a French name."

Even the visit of the letter carrier, interest in which is usually purely selfish on Christmas Day, was another chapter in the story of Our Boys.

"Run quick, dear, and ask the letter carrier if his brother has found his knitted helmet."

The report was bad, quite overshadowing ordinary Christmas glee over the letter carrier's burden. The Brother in France said in his last letter that the helmet had evidently been stolen by some soldier who needed it more than he, so rather than impose on the generosity of the Red Cross our letter carrier was going to get somebody in the Old Ladies' Home to knit him another.

Our Town is very proud of its Red Cross, which has supplied a complete outfit of knitted garments—sweater, wristers, muffler, helmet and socks—to every boy who has gone to the army. The Daughters of the American Revolution—and Our Town bristles with them—have done the same for the sailors. Intense rivalry exists between the two circles as to whose boys shall be the best equipped. When Joseph Sargent joined the navy he caused strained relations between them for days. His mother belonged to the Red Cross, and was in duty bound to give all her work to the army, while the Daughters naturally were envious of the honor of providing the first lieutenant from Our Town. Our Town harbors a suspicion that Joseph has two sets of knitted wear, but, of course, nobody knows. He is better off than the boy whose mother refused haughtily to accept a Red Cross outfit for him in the summer, saying that if her boy needed a sweater she guessed she could buy him one; and now he needs one, and the Red Cross supply has given out.

The Lady Next Door brought in a bit of holly as her gift, it being almost unattainable in Our Town this year. She apologized for not having made any presents, but she had worn a hole in the forefinger of her left hand from constant knitting and there was danger of blood poisoning.

That didn't matter, though, in view of the eighteen helmets she had made and two dozen sweaters.

Guns Above Holly

We put the holly in the place of honor over the piano. How essential the little things were a year ago! We would have whined that Christmas was not Christmas without holly and cranberry sauce. This year we commented cheerfully on the fact that we couldn't expect to fill up the railroad cars with holly when there was not room for guns, and that we wouldn't care to waste precious sugar (even supposing we could get it) on cranberry sauce. There was plenty of hemlock for decorations in the woods and plenty of currant jelly in the cupboard, made last summer according to Hoover's orders. The Lieutenant found in his stocking one precious cube of sugar and the War Bride had a whole glass jar of it to take back to the boarding house. The rest of us had learned to drink coffee without it.

And so the first War Christmas came to a merry dusk, when the shadow again fell. The War Bride sat at the piano and we sang again the Christmas carols, all of them—the funny ones and the beautiful ones—but with a new one for the end—not a Christmas song at all, but "My Country 'Tis of Thee"—and for the first time that day the War Bride's fingers faltered a bit and Our Mother's hand crept to the service pin over her heart.

The Children's Carnival

A Glorified Hour of Child Life Is Pictured by a Spectator

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: The children's carnival held for a week past at the Grand Central Palace is the best child community joy New York has ever spread or shared. No New York Christmas ought ever to be without one again. It has given at least 25,000 children a crowded hour of glorified child life, and as I write, Saturday afternoon, the number grows with the stream of children that makes the flood of entrance at the wickets.

It is no grown-up affair adjusted for children. It is child all through, and brought to every child that look of glad amaze which only the twinkling tapers of the Christmas tree can bring to a child's face. Circus, movies, theatre, Mother Goose, a wonderful slide down which shouting children sped, fishing pools for manifold fish of the Christmas breed, blindfold grab, merry-go-round, Ferris wheel, Noah's Ark, Treasure Island, real policemen, real fireman, real engines, real Santa Claus, the most wonderful ever—but why catalogue these breathless joys of childhood? To these, since the core and centre of this city Christmas carnival was a present to every child of any man with the colors that would come there, was added also the sombre note of "the trenches" and a moving and pathetic Christmas "here" and "over there," the latter with a desolate and battered roadside crucifix before which through all the hours one Italian woman and another knelt reverently, with prayer for the children that were present and the father that was away.

More than four thousand children of men in uniform sent their names in for presents. Hundreds of soldiers in camp and cantonment wrote for their children and gave their number, names and addresses, officers and privates alike. Americans all. With these, who came, free guests, for the gifts of a grateful city to the sons and daughters of its sons gone out ready for life's last sacrifice, there was added the surging stream of children who entered for a fee so small that it was no more than the poorest families give for the movies, and to these which were present were added wonders for children far greater than movies in all their glory. A great array of charities sent all their children. And alas, that such a draft should crown life's early cup with woe!), the maimed, the blind and the dumb were there in scores and scores.

Forty-odd years ago I knew the tenement life of this island as it is known only to the straight-out reporter, not the "special," or the "star," or the "department man," but just the plain, straight-out, all-around reporter. To the child this tenement life, worse then perhaps than now, seemed a grim, grimy, muddy and sidewalk horror, under which one child in three then died under six, and one child in about six in the next eight years. Herod has less chance at the Innocents now on Manhattan Island, but he still slays, and when the universal Christmas comes the shades gather around the growing boy and girl of tenement and small apartment as in no other week of the year.

The Christmas carnival for its hours makes these shadows to flee away. It gives what childhood so lacks in a city, the spirit of safe and spontaneous adventure and mutual joys. The sum needed to do all this is so small, the fruits so manifest and the joys so abounding that not one but a dozen Christmas carnivals should come in the future. How can any one without shame take the festival of the Christchild alone when this Community Christmas is possible?

The public of this island is always brimming its cup with regrets. I am glad to look back, as the new year comes across, to the New York of Tweed, with its dirt, its deaths, its disease, its squalor, its inconceivable corruption and its indescribable evil, and rejoice in the proof this Christmas Carnival gave of the advance of the City of Our Loves.

TALCOTT WILLIAMS.

New York, Dec. 29, 1917.

Washington and Lincoln

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: With the approaching celebrations of the birthdays of Washington and Lincoln it would seem that the citizens of this country should prepare to give some unusual observation to these days. The mere suspension of business by banking houses and certain governmental departments is not in keeping with the spirit of 1918.

Our country needs to be awakened to a keener sense of morale, as an important influence in winning this war, and a pretentious and serious observance of these national holidays would surely bring a means of realizing the necessity of we "stay-at-homes" doing "our bit" as consistently as our men and boys "over there."

Could not a movement be launched to have special services in all churches upon Washington's and Lincoln's birthdays, and the cessation of all business for at least one-half hour during the day?

The public schools will undoubtedly have exercises of some kind, and such observance would be far more impressive if throughout the entire country and our insular possessions all were conducted at a certain specified period.

The coöperation of our great department stores in all cities could no doubt be enlisted in such a movement, and they would be eager to observe some special form of exercises during the half hour of intermission of business.

By adopting a uniform programme, to be varied as little as possible and carried on simultaneously, the most impressive benefits would be achieved.

EDW. ROY PARSONS.

New York, December 29, 1917.

A Question of Pride

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: I trust I will not be deemed seditious if I disagree with the British officer who, in The Tribune of December 18, roundly criticises Congressman Miller for wanting to prohibit the use of American soldiers in France as personal servants to black the boots of their officers, even if paid for doing it.

This smacks too much of class distinctions. I remember a similar discussion during my college days at Harvard. President Eliot, in one of his public addresses, objected to the practice of students acting as waiters, as was customary in some colleges, and he also discouraged like service by students at summer hotels. Now, there were and are many men at Harvard who work their way through college, and they are highly respected by their fellows, who tolerate no distinctions based on wealth; but to the credit of Fair Harvard be it said no student is ever allowed to act as waiter in a Harvard dining hall or to engage in other menial service for the university harmful to a proper pride or self-respect.

It may be true, as the English officer asserts, that the private in the British army is proud to do any service for his officer, even to blacking his boots, but this is an obsequious pride happily foreign to the American soldier or civilian.

WILLIAM GRANT WEBSTER.

New York, Dec. 21, 1917.

A Much Desired Job

Officers' Orderlies Not Lackeys, but Important Cogs in Military Wheel

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: In recent editions of The Tribune I have noticed letters from a Congressman and certain well meaning but ignorant ladies in reference to "making our American soldiers shine their officers' shoes." But as yet I have read nothing from one who really knows anything about the matter. Hence this attempt to shed a little light upon the subject.

From the viewpoint of the men, it is a far from distasteful job. Nowadays the "dog robber" or "striker" has risen from the position of a servant who merely polishes and sweeps up to the rôle of bodyguard and confidential companion. He alone may draw out of charge to remain with his wounded officer. He carries messages, looks after correspondence, and in general is an important and responsible cog in our great military wheel.

I had no difficulty in getting an orderly; in fact, I had quite a job selecting one from all who desired the position. My orderly was excused from interior guard; he was excused from fatigue, such as digging latrines, cutting wood, and the distasteful K. P. work. He received extra pay, tips, and had four hours a day off to attend to my equipment. When off duty he had the run of my quarters, a share of my boxes from home, and he acquired numerous bits of clothing and equipment, of no use to me, but priceless to him. In the evening, while I studied, he wrote letters and read my magazines. All very undemocratic, according to your correspondents.

After drill the private soldier has nothing to do but clean his equipment, unless he has special detail. The officer, however, has no off-duty time. His hours "off" are filled with paper work and military correspondence. He conducts non-coms' school after supper, and after that attends officers' school; then he studies, if he is conscientious. He is supposed to be a highly paid professional man, and it would be a waste of Uncle Sam's money if he used his high-priced time for such things as polishing shoes and sweeping his quarters, at the same time neglecting more important matters.

And so I would say to the good ladies who temporarily dropped the knitting needle for the pen to go back to their useful and patriotic duties, and not to try to belittle the work of the officer's orderly, nor to cause dissension by interfering in a game of which they know nothing. The wooden-faced, unintelligent soldier servant, who stood at attention in front of his officer's tent all day is a thing of ancient history. Please do not revive his memory. Co. C. O.

Brooklyn, Dec. 27, 1917.

A Food Controller's Difficulties

(From The London Daily News and Leader)

Sir Arthur Yapp, in an interview, said: "The chief criticism I had to meet was that too large a quantity of barley and sugar is destroyed in the manufacture of beer. I asked the meeting to remember that I am a strong teetotaler and a temperance reformer in my own way. I pointed out that the brewing industry was the first to be rationed, the output being drastically reduced. But, rightly or wrongly, the large percentage of workers feel that beer is a food, and many of them go so far as to contend that they derive more energy out of it than out of a piece of bread."